



Consumer Assistance and Referee Centers

MAY 1998

A Consumer Assistance and Referee (CAR) Center is a vehicle emissions test facility that provides official Smog Check assistance and other services to motorists. The Department of Consumer Affairs/Bureau of Automotive Repair (DCA/BAR) has contracted with the California Community Colleges Foundation to manage the Consumer Assistance and Referee Centers. Located primarily at California community colleges, as well as some private institutions and part-time facilities in outlying areas, the new CAR Centers provide the following services:

Issue Waivers and Extensions

DCA/BAR currently offers two temporary financial relief programs that allow vehicles to be registered without passing their Smog Check inspection - the Repair Cost Waiver and the Economic Hardship Extension.

Repair Cost Waiver. To qualify for the two-year waiver, vehicle owners must spend a minimum amount of money on emissions-related repairs. Depending on the ZIP Code in which the vehicle is registered, some vehicles are subject to a \$450 minimum, while other vehicles will fall under a sliding scale limit based on the vehicle's model year.

The *Smog Check Program Areas* fact sheet is an informational listing of the areas which fall under each waiver category. It may be obtained by calling the Consumer Affairs hotline at 1-800-952-5210 or by visiting the Smog Check website at www.smogcheck.ca.gov.

Starting in 1998, the minimum repair spending amount will be fixed at \$450 throughout the state.

Economic Hardship Extension. The extension gives motorists until their next Smog Check to complete the necessary repairs to bring the vehicle back into compliance. This is not available in sliding scale areas. Starting in 1998, the extension will only be available for qualified low-income motorists, but they may need to spend up to \$250 on emissions-related repairs.

Both the Repair Cost Waiver and the Economic Hardship Extension are available only once per ownership of a vehicle, and a vehicle that is sold to another person must be repaired. (Motorists who have received Waivers or Extensions before January 1, 1998 may still qualify.)

Neither the Repair Cost Waiver nor the Economic Hardship Extension are available if a vehicle has missing, modified, or disconnected emissions equipment, is initially being registered in the state, is being sold, or was issued a waiver or extension during the previous Smog Check inspection.

Repair Cost Waiver Sliding Scale Cost Limit

| <i>YEAR</i> | <i>COST</i> |
|---------------|-------------|
| 1974-1975 | \$90 |
| 1976-1979 | \$125 |
| 1980-1989 | \$175 |
| 1990 or Newer | \$300 |

(Continued on Back)

Inspect Vehicle Engine Changes, Grey Market Vehicles, and Specially Constructed Vehicles

Once these vehicles have been initially inspected and certified by the Consumer Assistance and Referee Center, a BAR label will be affixed to the vehicle's door panel. Future inspections may be performed by any licensed Smog Check station.

Engine Changes. Any vehicle whose original engine has been replaced with an engine not originally offered for that vehicle's year, make, or model.

Grey Market Vehicles. Any vehicle imported into the United States which does not meet California standards.

Specially Constructed Vehicles. Any vehicle, such as a dune buggy or a replica of an exotic or antique vehicle, that has been specially constructed.

Grant Limited Parts Exemptions

Vehicles failing a Smog Check inspection due to the inability to locate the required emissions control part(s) through either local sources or the Parts Locator Service may receive an exemption through the Consumer Assistance and Referee Centers. Vehicle owners must contact the Parts Locator Service at 1-800-826-3566 to verify that the required part is not available before going to the Consumer Assistance and Referee Center. The Consumer Assistance and Referee Center will certify the vehicle if it passes all other aspects of the Smog Check inspection.

To Make an Appointment

Call the Scheduling Center at 1-800-622-7733 to schedule an appointment with a Consumer Assistance and Referee Center. An appropriate fee will be charged for Smog Check inspections or services performed at a Consumer Assistance and Referee Center.